

Hidden Strength



The year was 2013 and I had worked Homecare off and on for years but usually only part time. Then out of the blue I was contacted by an old acquaintance about Paul. The hours were full time. Good. I would like to say it was love at first sight, but the truth is, it was difficult. Paul wasn't used to me and I wasn't used to him. There were days I'd go home emotionally and physically exhausted. I truly thought he hated me. His Mom assured me that wasn't true. Just give it time. So, I did. I'm incredibly happy I stuck it out. Not only is Paul a wonderful client but he is a wonderful friend. He showed me that I have way more patience than I thought. I also have a ton of love to give, and Paul lets me love him. Nothing makes me happier than making him laugh and smile. When I'm not working, I still think of him and I hope he's having a good day. He has given me a purpose beyond myself. I talk about my job with genuine passion, and it fills me up with pride. So, if you're in a situation where you feel overwhelmed and you doubt yourself, stick to it a little longer. You just might find strength and love you didn't know you had.

~Norm

November Annual Retreat

A good time was had by all on November 21st, 2020 as L'Arche Avalon members attended our third annual retreat, held at the Lantern. About 30 members attended what many felt was a very relaxing, informative and inspiring retreat day. The activities included an opening parade that



represented the movement from light into darkness where we found new light as the labyrinth was lit up. This opening reflected the theme for the retreat, "The Festival of



Lights." The theme songs were "Tiny Lights" and "This Little

Light of Mine,". Everyone enjoyed singing these, accompanied by our newest Board member, Jan Buley, for whom this was her first L'Arche Avalon retreat. The theme was felt

by everyone as many have expressed how dark life has been in these times of the pandemic.

We welcomed home our special guest and Atlantic Team Leader, Jenn Power, who shared in all of the activities and was a major help with our audio-visual needs and the retreat program activities. Jenn gave an excellent reflection on finding light in the darkness, which complemented the playing again of the recent video made by our Presentation Sisters, representing the shining light of the Foundress, Sr. Nano Nagle.



The activities were inclusive, utilizing everyone's talents; including adding things to the mural painted by Maureen Mackinnon and Rhonda Snow which reflected the movement from darkness to light. Each person added words, pictures or drawing, reflecting how each of us felt that we light up the

darkness in each other's lives. Members gathered and made a mandala utilizing natural materials, such as pine cones, twigs, and leaves of different colours. The lunch was a shared endeavour and was enjoyed by everyone, as we ate in our bubbles and safely distanced.





The day seemed to fly by, yet it didn't feel rushed. Creativity burst forth and we felt the light in the day grow out of the initial darkness we had experienced.

~ Peter B



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Hold Fast – Newfoundland And Labrador

A Message from our Board Chair

Who would have thought that as we near the end of February, 2021 we would be in a Level 5 lockdown requiring that we remain in our individual family bubbles and refrain from being around others, except to get essentials like groceries and medications, and then only when utilizing a mask and maintaining social distancing as much as possible? As Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Janice Fitzgerald says at the end of every briefing, we need to ‘Hold Fast’ at this particular time.



Notwithstanding these restrictions, the Board of Directors continues to work hard in its efforts to bring L’Arche homes to this province. We are engaged in discussions with the City of St. John’s concerning zoning matters relating to the lands in Pleasantville. The City has expressed support for our project and we are optimistic that any issues that arise will be satisfactorily resolved.

We have also entered into a contract with a public relations and marketing firm to carry out a Phase 1 feasibility study. This study will examine the tactics and resources needed in order for us to shape a case for support and subsequently carry out a successful capital campaign. This is a very exciting and important step in our ongoing journey.

It is my sincere hope that COVID 19 will be brought under control in the near future and that before too long we will again be able to meet in-person and enjoy the company of each other. Until then, take care and stay safe.

~ Lewis

Student Work

L’Arche Avalon partnered with the Centre for Social Enterprise at Memorial University to provide work opportunities for two Graduate Students during the Fall term. Ankit Srivastav and Modeline Longjohn worked with us for twenty weeks.





They developed the drafts of three versions of our Business Plan which we will use while seeking funding for building and maintaining our homes. These include a one plan snapshot, a ten page review, and the longer 45 page version which includes all information regarding the project. The long version is currently being edited by the Business Plan subcommittee.

They composed draft application letters for funding for items on our wish list. Everything we could think of, from heat exchangers to folding chairs, from accessible van to security system. These are being held until we reach that stage of fundraising and will then be transferred to letterhead and signed and sent out as potential funders' deadlines approach. They also compiled a spreadsheet of Grant Opportunities and current donors and partners.

They reviewed our financial reporting needs and researched publicly available software that could fill our needs. This report is currently being reviewed by our accountant.

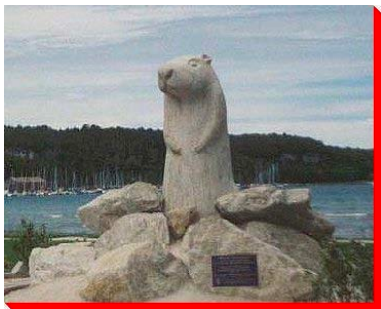
They also created a how-to video for creating Zoom meetings.



They have now finished this work term with us, but we look forward to working with them again, and wish them well with their studies.

If you are interested in more information about the students' work please contact Patti at pattittap@live.com

Groundhog Day



Sometimes the places we live are known for something special like Jelly Bean Row in St. John's, or for being a little bit different than places nearby such as God's country in Conception Bay South. A place might have had a famous person come from there or an athlete at the top of their sport such as Alan Doyle from Petty Harbour or Kaetlyn Osmond from Marystown.

Sarah King, one of our board members, is not from NL but like a lot of Newfoundlanders she's from a small town. Wiarton Ontario is known for Willie's yearly prediction on Groundhog Day (Feb 2). Willie is special because he's albino. Growing up, Sarah remembers large crowds and lots of cars lining the streets for the fun activities during the Wiarton



Willie Festival. When she was in grade seven, Willie died and it was HUGE news, there was a girl in grade 8 who cried! Of course, the prediction was virtual this year with fewer news cameras and no crowds. The prediction for 2021 is early spring. Let's face it though; if spring comes mid-March, six weeks after groundhog day, then it is an early spring and six more weeks of winter all at the same time!

One year Sarah entered into a short story contest and wrote a story about Willie that got published in a book. She promises to get us a copy and a proper picture the next time she goes home. For now, these pictures from the internet will have to do.

~ Sarah

With Thanks



We would like to thank the Sisters of Mercy and the Presentation Sisters for their continued support. Their support extends far beyond just financial. Both Orders have supported us through prayer and their presence at our many activities and gatherings. The Presentation Sisters also kindly provide L'Arche Avalon with access to The Lantern as a place to hold a number of our meetings.

In Loving Memory

Sr. Kieran Seaward

August 21, 1941 - January 5, 2021

We have to pass on the sad news of Sister Kieran's passing on January 5, 2021. Kieran was quite a friend to our community. She came regularly to gatherings, Thursday lunches at the Mall, picnics by Quidi Vidi, Jam Circles, and walks around Mundy Pond as recently as this past summer. She was very supportive of L'Arche. On a personal level, she was warm and funny and enjoyed a good laugh and telling us stories about growing up in Corner Brook; she was a lovely woman. Lewis Andrews and Sheilah Mackinnon Drover attended the funeral on behalf of our community. The ceremony was comforting, the music uplifting and the readings had the right mixture of joy and sadness at the loss so many feel.



Rest in peace, dear Kieran. You will be sorely missed.

Meet our Newest Board Member

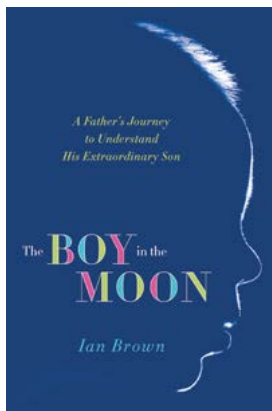
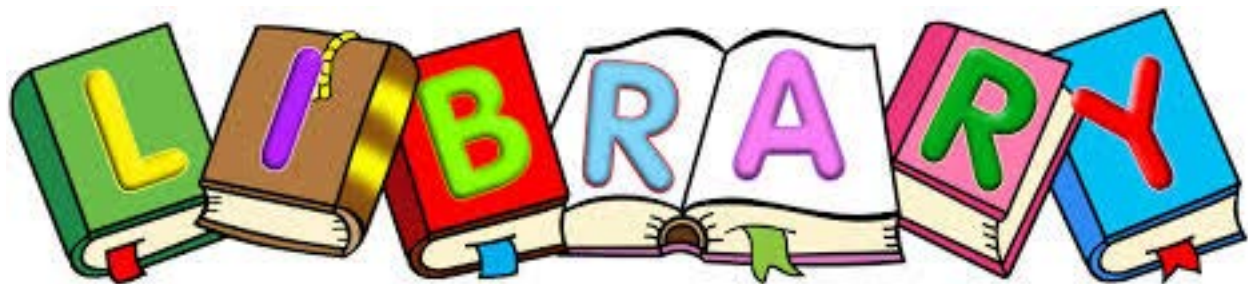


Addicted to teaching and learning, Jan Buley shares her love for elementary literacies and drama education with teacher candidates at Memorial University's Faculty of Education. Jan's Ph.D. from the Steinhardt School, New York University, examined the assumptions, beliefs and contradictions associated with family engagement in schools. Jan has been an elementary teacher-learner for over 25 years and has a rather astonishing collection of puppets and picture books. She is especially interested in keeping the sparks of imagination alive in the minds of everyone she meets, and believes that everyone is capable of being a creative contributor to the planet.

While studying at Acadia University, she encountered the L'Arche community and playgroup in the town of Wolfville, NS. Along with students in the drama education course, Jan witnessed the magic of storytelling, singing and the arts with children who were part of the L'Arche community in the valley. Through the arts—music, storytelling, dance, visual art and drama, dreams can be realities. It is through engaging in the arts

that Jan believes the world can be a better place. Through the arts, we tap into our senses and our experiences, we laugh, we remember, we capture songs with others and we forge new communities.

Jan is thrilled and honoured to be part of the 'grassroots' L'Arche group here on the Avalon, and is excited to see how plans for the future will grow and expand. Jan believes that curiosity and finding beauty are necessary for survival and in her spare time, she adores gardening, storytelling, hiking and writing. Jan lives with Nellie, her border collie, two lazy cats and her music educator partner, David, who is, thankfully, a fabulous cook. She has never made a pie that anyone raved about.



A story of a father's love and searching for more. That's how I see it. Ian Brown's son is no typical child. With such a rare diagnosis it was hard to get supports from the health care professionals but also the disability community. Walker's birth changed every aspect of the family life and brought so many questions about meaning, quality of life and the future. Ian's search for more and the answer to the question 'What will happen to my son when I am no longer here' finds some answers in L'Arche.

I enjoyed this story's philosophical and critical look at society's views of disabled people, but also, the very personal notes as Ian describes his story of building a relationship with his son.

Renovations For Accessibility



As we and our dependents age, our needs around accessibility often change and we are required to make changes in our homes which will accommodate these needs. This is preferable to moving from the familiar home and neighbourhood.

There are many ways to make homes more accessible and we invite readers to send us any questions they have. We will have an experienced interior designer and carpenter discuss the issues and answer questions in our next three issues.

If there are questions which anyone would like answered more quickly, we can put you in touch with people who can discuss the problems you are having. They would be in a position to recommend possible solutions and give you an idea of the cost. It might be as simple as installing grab bars or replacing knobs with door handles, or something larger like widening doorways, reconfiguring a bathroom, building a ramp, or installing an interior or exterior vertical platform lift.

Address your questions to lorraine@larcheavalon.ca

Example of Common Bathroom Renovation:

This photo shows a standard 5' x 10' bathroom which after renovation allows for a wheelchair to enter and turn around. The doorway was widened to install a 36" door, a bathroom linen closet was replaced by the 13" deep shelving/drawer unit, grab bars were installed to allow transfer from wheelchair to toilet, and the original basin and larger vanity were replaced by the one shown which permits wheelchair access. New flooring was installed.





Covid Safe Online Auction



March 25 – April 1, 2021

To drop off donations for the auction,
please contact Lorraine (689-2936)
to arrange for contactless drop off by March 15

For more details and/or to participate, see
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2603354879775579>

